

Adolescent Immunization

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are immunizations important for teens?

Teens need immunizations to stay healthy. The diseases vaccines protect against are not something a person outgrows. Some diseases, like chickenpox, are more dangerous for teens and adults than they are for young children.

Who recommends immunizations for teens?

All of the major medical associations agree that teens need immunizations to stay healthy. Some of the immunizations recommended for teens are also required to attend school in Washington.

All of the immunizations that teens need can be started during the adolescent health care visit at age 11 or 12 years. This health care visit is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the American Medical Association (AMA), and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Which immunizations do teens need?

All teens need the following immunizations if they haven't already received them.

Vaccine	Doses	Required for School
Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)	2 doses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Varicella (chickenpox)*		
Under age 13 years	1 dose	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13 years and older	2 doses	
Hepatitis A	2 doses	
Hepatitis B	3 doses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap)**	1 dose	Will be required July 1, 2007
Tetanus and diphtheria booster	1 dose	
Polio***	4 doses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

* Varicella vaccine is recommended for teens that haven't had the chickenpox or been previously vaccinated.

** Tdap is a new vaccine. Tdap should replace one Td booster. If teens get Tdap at age 11 years, they will not need their next Td booster until age 21 years. **Tdap will be required for all sixth graders beginning July 1, 2007.**

*** The polio vaccine series can be given up until age 18 years.

Teens with chronic health conditions like asthma and diabetes and teens that have weakened immune systems may need additional immunizations. Check with your teens' health care provider to find out if they need the following immunizations.

- Influenza (flu)
Teens that are family members or caregivers of people who are at high risk of severe complications from the flu should also get a flu vaccination.
- Pneumococcal
- Meningococcal

When should teens get these immunizations?

A health care visit is recommended for all teens aged 11-12 years. All of the immunizations that a teen needs should be started at this visit. However, many of the immunizations recommended for teens can be given before age 11 years.

Teens can also get immunizations when they see their health care provider for sports physicals or mild illnesses.

Where can teens get immunizations?

Teens should go to their regular doctor, nurse, or clinic for immunizations. Teens can also get immunizations at their local health department or pharmacy.

Most health insurance companies pay for all recommended immunizations. Many Washington teens can receive low cost or free immunizations through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. For more information about the Washington VFC Program or to locate a VFC provider call the Washington State Immunization Program CHILD Profile at 866-397-0337 or 360-236-3595.

Parents can also call the WithinReach Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 for help finding free or low-cost immunizations for their teen.

Are immunizations required to attend school in Washington?

Yes. See the “*Which Immunizations Do Teens Need*” section or [click here](#) to find out which immunizations are required for students entering sixth-twelfth grade in school year 2006-2007. Sixth graders that had chickenpox as a child will not need to get the vaccine to attend school. Instead, parents will need to record the year their child had chickenpox on the school entry form.

Health care providers who use Washington State's CHILD Profile Immunization Registry can track each patient's immunizations and history of chickenpox disease. Providers can also print the necessary school and childcare forms directly from the Immunization Registry – parents should be sure to request this at least a month ahead of time. Parents can also check to see if their child has immunization records in the Immunization Registry by calling the CHILD Profile Help Desk at 1-800-325-5599.

What other preventive health services do teens need?

The adolescent health visit may include a wide variety of health education, screening, and physical assessment services. Topics may include diet/nutrition, exercise, injury prevention, mental health, and risk behaviors, as well as immunizations. Preventive health services vary depending on each teen's specific needs.

Where can I get more information?

Call your doctor, nurse, or [local health department](http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm) (www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm) for more information about immunizations and other preventive health services.